

28 August 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: Participants in the USSR and Southeast Asia Area Program  
conducted by the Office of Training, summer 1952.

SUBJECT : Evaluation of Program.

The Office of Training wishes to prepare an evaluation of the two summer area programs held during July and August. This evaluation depends primarily on your assessments. It will be used for guidance in planning future related programs. Your contribution of comment and constructive suggestions will be much appreciated (It is emphasized that collection of only favorable, or unfavorable comments is not the object of this assessment. It is desired to assemble objective favorable and unfavorable comments as guidance for planning future related programs). It is suggested that your remarks include comment on the following points.

1. Do you feel that this type of area program can contribute to increasing analyst effectiveness? If so, why? If not, why not? What type of program would be more useful?

2. Do you feel that this particular program was useful to you? If so, how? If not, why not?

3. Please comment on the following:

a. Content and scope of subject matter (Particularly, did you feel that it was relevant or irrelevant to your normal work problems; that it was possibly relevant, but of a nature that it is assumed analysts in your component necessarily have before they can qualify for the work for which they were employed; that it was relevant, but too general or too specific.)

b. Manner and method of presentation.

c. Time allotted for course (Was the number of weeks inadequate or excessive? Was the period of two hours for each session too short, satisfactory, or too long?)

d. Was the balance between lecture and discussion satisfactory, or do you feel that it would have been helpful to have more discussion or less discussion? Would you favor having certain periods devoted entirely to discussion of selected problems?

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4. Do you approve of the policy that students not be required to do collateral reading or prepare papers, or do you think it would be both reasonable and useful if students expected to do limited reading and preparation of papers?

In addition to your remarks on the above points, any other comments or suggestions that you may wish to contribute for improvement of future related program will be appreciated.

Please forward your written comments to [redacted] Room 1301, "I" 25X1 Building as early as possible.

In general, I think the summer area program was quite successful. Nearly all the lectures were in some way related to the analysts' work, and, I believe, nearly any contribution to his background knowledge of the area will, to some degree, increase his effectiveness.

The effectiveness of the program was hindered, to a large extent, by (1) the disparity in the training and backgrounds of the people taking the course, and (2) by the lecturers' understandable lack of understanding of this situation and/or their inability, within the ~~xxx~~ limits of the program, to lecture on the intermediate and advanced levels simultaneously.

The program was useful to me, personally, as a review of the history and politics of the USSR. The course on basic economic theory, although not directly applicable to my work at present, and quite helpful and informative.

Because of the high degree of specialization in the work of this division, I doubt that it would be possible to devise a study program which would be equally helpful to all participants. The history lectures in the summer program were very good background for those who were unfamiliar with the history of the Soviet period. I thought [redacted] lectures showed considerable thought and preparation, and, for the most part, covered well the main points of Soviet history. [redacted] field, however, is not primarily Soviet history, and his more advanced students found certain errors of fact and interpretation in his lectures. On the other hand, I thought that [redacted] lectures on Soviet political theory and practice were possibly too advanced for a number of the students, and this, plus the difficulty some had in understanding him, made comprehension of his lecture difficult for some. I, personally, found him the best and most stimulating of the three lecturers and thought he was quite a good choice to deliver that series of lectures. [redacted] lectures on basic economic theory were helpful to many of the students who are not trained in economics, but he is not primarily a Soviet economist, and his information on the Soviet economic system was incomplete and out of date. Here again, ~~xxx~~ an "expert" on the Soviet economic system would be necessary to satisfy the intellectual demands of the more advanced students, while for the others, a more comprehensive picture of the Soviet economic system (emphasis on Soviet, rather than ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ economic) would have been

helpful. (I took such a course several years ago at The American University and found it quite helpful in my work, which is not primarily in economics. I would highly recommend such a course for this division.)

The time-place element, I felt, was not entirely satisfactory. While I think the lectures should definitely last for two hours, there is no doubt but that many people became restless and inattentive. In some cases this may have been due to the pressure of work piling up; and to a large extent, I think, it was due to the fact that it is difficult to sit and take notes in a folding chair for any length of time. Furthermore, the small room and air-conditioner were insufficient to provide enough fresh air to keep the students alert; although cool, the room was stuffy and the air stale. Judging by the way attendance fell off (due partly to summer leaves), I would say that 80 hours was too long for the course, primarily because of work pressures. I would suggest 2-hour lectures, three times a week, for 8-10 weeks.

The balance between lectures and discussion was satisfactory to the extent that lecturers provided ample time for and encouraged discussion. However, the disparity in the experience and training of the various students made discussions difficult: the poorer and less well-trained students were understandably reluctant to show their "ignorance" by asking questions, while many of the better informed students hesitated to "show off" by asking questions or becoming involved in discussions. Most of the class discussion was carried on by the same half dozen students. Possibly elementary-intermediate lectures in Soviet history, politics, and economics for the less trained students, and lecture-seminars for the advanced members would provide a solution. Lecture-seminars devoted to specific problems selected in advance by both the students and instructors might prove helpful, and these more in politics and economics than in history, for our purposes. In either case, I believe some outside reading work should be strongly encouraged, if not required.

In ~~general~~ general, I think the summer training program was quite helpful and should be continued.

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